

# **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POPULATION**

**COURTS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
AND  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POPULATION

- ***HOW DOES EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAUMA CAUSE LATER PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL DISEASE?***
  - Disturbance of fundamental neurodevelopment
  - Dysregulation of the capacity to calm
  - Disturbance of capacity for attachment
  - Greatly increased propensity for drugs and alcohol

# **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POPULATION**

- ***ATTEMPTS TO SELF-REGULATE AND CALM***
  - DRUGS/ALCOHOL/TOBACCO
- ***ATTEMPTS TO COMPENSATE FOR POOR ATTACHMENT CAPACITY***
- ***ATTEMPTS TO SURVIVE WITHOUT DEPENDABLE LIFE SKILLS***

# HOW IS DELINQUENCY RELATED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

- Early neurodevelopment is altered, leaving a child without the fundamental brain capacity for:
  - Sitting quietly and learning
  - Controlling aggressive impulses
  - Making friends and trusting adults
  - Resisting drugs and alcohol

# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POPULATION

## PRIMARY EFFECTS OF MALTREATMENT

- Impulsivity
- Dysregulation of Arousal
- Dysregulated Moods—Labile and Changeable
- Dysregulated Behavior—Explosive and Aggressive
- Poor Interpersonal Relations—Impaired Attachments and Empathy
- Impaired “executive function”

## CORE TRAITS OF DELINQUENCY

- Impulsivity
- Dysregulation of Arousal
- Dysregulated Moods—Labile and Changeable
- Dysregulated Behavior—Explosive and Aggressive
- Poor Interpersonal Relations—Impaired Attachments and Empathy
- Impaired “executive function”

# HOW ARE THESE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS MANAGED ?

- High rates of mis-diagnosis
- Strong dependence on medication and over-medication
- Over dependence on medical model
- Confinement in hospitals, residential treatment programs, detention and incarceration

# HOW IS THE BRAIN REPAIRED AND THESE FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS TREATED?

## **TRAUMA THERAPIES**

- Re-building self-regulation for early childhood maltreatment where there are no memories
- Reducing and containing traumatic memories
- Occupational therapy
- Exercise, music, animals

## **SKILL BUILDING FOR COMPETENCE**

- Education
- Pre-vocational and vocational
- Life management skills
- Social and interpersonal skills

# RECOMMENDATIONS—*PRIMARY PREVENTION OF MALTREATMENT*

- Family and parent supports
- Public education about the effects of abuse
- High school classes on early child development
- Reduce social tolerance for abuse
- Public education about parenting skills

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DELINQUENT POPULATION

- Applied trauma treatments
- Functional / vocational skills
- Large motor activity—recreation, sports
- Multisensory activities—art, music, yoga, movement
- Reduction of psychotropics
- Discharge planning and post-release supports
- Minimizing of coercive interventions